

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Oldham-Ramona School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

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Dates of On Site Visit: April 18, 2002

Date of Report: July 3, 2002

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Maintenance	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Newsletters/newspaper ads
- ? Budget information/ Head-Start agreement
- ? Yearly child find files
- ? Personnel information (Table B)
- ? Student file reviews

- ? Preschool/ kindergarten child find
- ? Placement data by age (Table I)
- ? Surveys
- ? Special education staff (Table B)
- ? Placement alternative data (F)
- ? South Dakota functional standards
- ? Content standards
- ? SAT 9 participation rates (Table D)
- ? Exiting data (Table H)
- ? Child count

Promising Practice

The steering committee determined areas of promising practices in their self-assessment to be that the district has a process for child find that is exemplary. There is also coordination with other agencies such as Head Start to help find children. Additionally, 100% of their students participated in state and district wide assessments with a variety of modifications as appropriate. The district also has 0% expulsion/suspension.

Maintenance

The steering committee determined areas of maintenance in their self-assessment to be that the school district has a TAT team in place that is very successful in helping students before the referral is made. All policies and procedures are in place for children voluntarily placed in private schools. Policies and procedures are also in place for out-of-district placement.

Needs Improvement

Surveys show the general education teachers need more training in identifying and how to refer students. The steering committee felt teachers and parents need more opportunities to attend workshops and trainings.

Out of Compliance

The steering committee indicated that the district does not have an active IEP for two students reported on the 2000 child.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The review team found the TAT team to be a promising practice. This team is very active in meeting the needs of children. They meet and share information on each individual student where there is a concern. Many strategies and modifications are tried to help each student succeed before the referral process begins. Their timelines are very appropriate so students don't get stuck in the middle without help.

Maintenance

The review team agrees with all areas of maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Areas that need improvement

The review team agrees with all areas in need of improvement for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Areas out of compliance

24:05:1703. Annual report of children served.

The review team was unable to verify that services were provided to 2 students listed on the district's 2000 child count. Interview also confirmed there was not an active IEP on these students as of December 1, 2000.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education
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All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Parental rights brochure
- ? Surveys
- ? Personnel information (Table B)
- ? Functional standards
- ? Content standards
- ? File reviews
- ? Preschool screening information
- ? Suspension/expulsion data (Table C)

Maintenance

The steering committee determined areas of maintenance in their self-assessment to be that the district provides free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. Policies and procedures are in place and special education staff attends workshops and training dealing with FAPE aspects and students with disabilities. Policies and procedures are also in place for removing children with disabilities from school and staff is trained to deal with this procedure.

Areas that need improvement

Based on their self-assessment the steering committee determined an area needing improvement is general education staff should be encouraged to attend more special education workshops/trainings to increase their knowledge of aspects of FAPE and children with disabilities.

Validation Results

Maintenance

The review team agrees with all areas of maintenance for Free Appropriate Public Education as concluded by the steering committee.

Areas that need improvement

The review team agrees with all areas in need of improvement for Free Appropriate Public Education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Prior notice form
- ? Training/workshops
- ? Personnel information (Table B)
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Surveys

Promising Practices

Based upon the data reviewed, the steering committee determined comprehensive evaluations are conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff and other agencies as deemed appropriate by the child's review team. Parent input is documented on IEPs. The staff provides appropriate written notice and has obtained informed/signed consent before assessments are administered. Parent surveys indicate parents are asked to provide input about their child during the IEP process.

Maintenance

The steering committee determined areas of maintenance to be all assessments administered are on a state-approved list. Certified staff carries out policies and procedures for appropriate evaluations. IEP teams consider evaluation or reevaluation findings to determine whether the child has or continues to have a particular disability.

Areas that need improvement

The steering committee determined areas that need improvement are, a lack of functional assessments is evident in evaluation reports, there is a lack of documented parent input in student files, and that forms are consistently sent, but sometimes not returned.

Validation Results

Maintenance

The review team agrees with all areas of maintenance for Appropriate Evaluation as concluded by the steering committee.

Areas out of compliance

24:05:25:04 Evaluation Procedure

Through interviews and file reviews, the monitoring team found the district to be unfamiliar with the functional assessment requirement. District staff did not include functional information in the evaluation process or understand that this information was to be used for determining specific skills areas affected by the student's disability, the student's present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum or development of annual goals and short term instructional objectives. Functional assessment information is available through a variety of sources in the district, however, there is not an established process for collecting, summarizing or integrating the information into the 25 day evaluation process or the student's IEP.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Parental rights
- ? Prior notice/IEP forms
- ? IEPs
- ? Table B
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Student surveys
- ? Parent surveys
- ? Inservice/training

Promising Practices

Based on the data reviewed, the steering committee determined staff, parent and students have attended transition workshops that addressed transfer of rights procedures. All files indicate parent/students have received necessary information concerning parents and student rights. A review of files indicated parents are giving consent for all proposed activities. No complaints have been filed involving the Oldham-Ramona School District. They have implemented appropriate procedures for confidentiality and access to records.

Maintenance

The steering committee determined areas of maintenance in their self-assessment to be that the school district has staff that is certified and adequately trained for all areas of procedural safeguards.

Documentation in student files and parent surveys reflect parents/students have received appropriate written notice. Student files and parent surveys reflected parents initialed IEPs, indicating they received parents right in their language of preference.

Areas that need improvement

The steering committee determined an area requiring improvement, based upon their self-assessment, is a statement needs to be included that students will be informed about transfer of rights one year prior (age 17) to reaching the age of majority (age 18) in the comprehensive plan and parents' rights pamphlet.

Validation Results

Maintenance

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance identified for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Areas that need improvement

The monitoring team agrees with the area of need improvement identified for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

The team would like to clarify the comprehensive plan and parents' right brochure states that a student will be informed about transfer of rights before the age of 18.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Student file reviews
- ? South Dakota technical assistance guide for IEPs
- ? Teacher certificates
- ? Table B
- ? Table M
- ? Table N
- ? Table L
- ? Surveys

Maintenance

Based upon the data reviewed, the steering committee concluded that the district has policies and procedures in place assuring students' IEPs are appropriately developed and in effect for eligible students. Trained and certified staff develops IEPs. There have been no complaints or hearings for the district, and information from file reviews show the district has appropriate IEPs implemented with appropriate team membership present. All parents and some students, if age appropriate, are attending IEP meetings. IEPs are consistently reviewed on/before annual date and progress reports are sent at the same times as non-disabled students. Students with IEPs participate in all appropriate general education classes and activities.

Validation Results

Maintenance

The review team agrees with all areas of maintenance identified under individual education program.

Areas out of compliance

24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. In 9 out of 12 files reviewed, present levels of performance were not linked to evaluation and were not skill specific. Present levels of performance statements were vague. For example, " __ needs are in the areas of comprehension, writing, expressive language, and math applications." " __ is exhibiting behaviors which are affecting her learning." " Spelling, grammar, and handwriting are poor on any written assignments, but sentences are creative and show imagination. Math computation continues to be a struggle. __understands what he needs to get done, but the computation slows him down."

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- ? Comprehensive plan
- ? Budget information
- ? Preschool/Headstart agreement
- ? Surveys
- ? Teacher schedules
- ? Student file reviews
- ? Tables E, F, L, M, and N

Promising practices

The steering committee found the Oldham-Ramona/Headstart agreement to be a promising practice, as it provides the least restrictive environment for children from ages 3 to 5. Trained and certified staff is employed in early childhood through grade 12 to provide the least restrictive environment for students.

Maintenance

The steering committee cited no complaints and/or hearings, and that parent/student surveys show the majority of students are participating with their peers to show that the district is maintaining compliance in regards to least restrictive environment. The amount of students receiving service in the regular classroom with modifications is at a higher percentage than the state average.

Validation Results**Promising practices**

Through interview and tour of the early childhood program, the review team validated this promising practice in the district. The Oldham/Ramona preschool is open to all children 3 to 5. Funding comes from Headstart and the local school district. The teacher is certified for Headstart and the district hires the aide. There is parent training offered to all parents through this program.

Maintenance

The review team agrees with all areas of maintenance identified for least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.